

The Sunday School

LESSON 11—SEPTEMBER 9, 1900

The Good Samaritan—Luke 10:25-37

Golden Text—Love thy neighbor as thyself.—
Lev. 19:18.

Lesson Thought.—Our neighbors are those who need help and whom we can help.

Time.—In November A. D. 29.

Place.—Beyond Jordan, somewhere in Perea.

Persons.—Jesus nearly 33 years old.

Home Readings

Deut. 6:1-13; Lev. 19:11-18; Rom 12:9-21; I Cor. 13:1-10; Matt. 5:43-48; Mark 12:28-34.

Lesson Links

At Jerusalem Jesus had spoken the parable of the Good Shepherd. Then the seventy had returned with joy to him in Perea. For he had gone from the feast of the tabernacles at Jerusalem to Perea, the country east of the Jordan. Here in this region, away from the hate of the Pharisees of Jerusalem Jesus spent the most of the remaining six months of his earthly life. Here in Perea he spoke many of his most wonderful words. He had to meet and confute Pharisees here, but they had not yet determined on his death, as had those at Jerusalem.

The Lesson Story

Christ's teaching was sure to be recognized as opposed to theirs by the Scribes and Pharisees. Christ could help them only by showing them how far wrong they were.

A Lawyer.—A lawyer in those days was not what they are now. A Jewish lawyer was a Bible teacher. But as a class they had a conceit that was anything but teachable. They were the official interpreters of the Jewish law. And who was this Galilean peasant who presumed to teach the law in a way opposed to them and their methods? So, one of them, perhaps one of the keenest, stood up and asked Jesus a question. Not that he desired information, but that he might catch Jesus in his words.

The Lawyer's Question.—The question he asked was very proper. It was, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Had he been in earnest Jesus would have plainly told him. But Jesus saw his heart and was not to be caught. Hence, Jesus replied by asking, "What is written in the law? How readest thou? You pretend to be a teacher of the law and should know what the law says. Also you believe that the law contains directions whereby men can obtain eternal life. Why do you ask me? You ought to know yourself."

The lawyer caught at his own game and now put on the defensive replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." This was a splendid answer. And if obeyed in spirit and in truth would result in eternal life. Jesus said, "You have answered right; do this and you shall live (eternally)."

The Lawyer Confuted.—The question whereby the lawyer had thought to catch Je-

sus had led to his own confusion. Jesus had evidently got the better of him in the argument. But the lawyer was not satisfied. But wishing to justify himself, i. e., to redeem his reputation for argument, asked, "And who is my neighbor?" This lawyer was not willing to be worsted in an argument with this unlettered carpenter. His question gave Jesus the opportunity not only to successfully answer his question, but also to teach a lesson on neighborliness that was badly needed.

Christ's Reply.—Said Jesus, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. And he fell among robbers who stripped him of his clothes and beat him also and left him half dead on the road." The road is a bad one for the robbers which can easily hide along it.

The Priest.—"By coincidence a certain priest who had been up to Jerusalem in attendance on his duties in the temple came along that same road. But when he saw the half-killed man he passed by on the other side of the road." This priest was like too many Christians who consider their religious duties done when they have been to church. He could have found many excuses for passing by without helping. He had been from home so long that he did not have time. Or, he feared that the robbers might treat him likewise.

The Levite.—"And in like manner a Levite also coming down from Jerusalem looked at him and passed by on the other side." Both these men may have said, "Too bad! I pity the poor fellow." But did nothing to help him.

The Samaritan.—"But a certain Samaritan whom you Jews despise and think are dogs and have no religion, in his journey came where the poor man lay. And when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him and bound up his wounds, poured on them oil and wine. And he got off his own beast, set the wounded man on and brought him to the inn or hotel and took care of him. The next day when he had to go on, he took out enough money to pay the man's board for several days and ordered the inn-keeper to care for the man promising to pay the rest when he returned."

The Question of Jesus.—Now, Jesus turning to the lawyer asked, "Which of these three do you think was neighbor to the man who fell among thieves?" The case was so plain that the lawyer could not but answer, "He that showed mercy on him." This put the definition of a neighbor on new grounds. Not on grounds of blood or distance, but of need and conduct in the presence of that need. This teaching of Jesus was entirely opposed to the Jewish ideas.

And now in reply, Jesus said, "Go thou and do likewise. You lawyers spend your time in talking about these things. Go and do as the Samaritan did and you will learn the lesson of true neighborliness."

So it was in Christ's day, men were *talking* rather than *doing*. They were not seeking for truth but honor. Jesus put the mat-

ter on the plane of duty. Sentiment cannot take the place of good works. Reasoning cannot take the place of the love of Christ. "Go and do thou likewise" to the needy in physical and spiritual matters.

Many are they who lie by the wayside, robbed and half dead. Many are they who are in the clutches of the devil. Are we helping them, or are we passing by on the other side.

Lesson Applied

- 1 The man who asks Christ a question to "tempt him" will not receive a plain answer.
- 2 Too many questions are asked as the lawyer asked his,—to show how smart we are or to down the teacher.
- 3 Eternal life was a greater thing than the lawyer thought.
- 4 Eternal life is not only eternal in *duration*, but also in *kind*.
- 5 Don't try to "get the best" of Christ.
- 6 Men to-day, like that lawyer, desire to justify themselves before Christ and Christ's servants. Their only salvation, if they knew it is, not to "justify" themselves in their sin, but confess it and let Jesus justify them. Rom 5:1.
- 7 Don't be a neighbor to one in need to be seen of men, but "for Love's sweet sake."
- 8 It is well to be orthodox, but it is better to have the love of Christ and be a samaritan, than to be orthodox without it.
- 9 The trouble with priest and levite was not that they were orthodox, but that they had lost the spirit of orthodoxy while retaining the letter.
- 10 The robbers who wait and kill on life's road are many, but satan is chief of them all.
- 11 The Jericho road is dangerous, but there is a Good Samaritan, Jesus Christ.
- 12 No man will love his neighbor as himself unless he loves God with his whole heart and mind.
- 13 It is positive proof that one does not love God supremely who does not love his neighbor as himself.
- 14 "Go thou and do likewise" is an eternal command.

J. L. GILLIN.

Church News

AT WINONA

C. F. YODER

By his gracious Providence
Hath the Father brought us on
Till the time for Conference
At Winona;

Let us sing a joyful song,
Let its echoes roll along
Till we meet a mighty throng
At Winona.

CHORUS

At Winona! Bright Winona!
Yes we'll soon be gathered there
Blessed fellowship to share
Working, praising everywhere,
At Winona.

Let us leave the carping care
Of the daily toil behind,
And for worship gather there
At Winona;
There where flowers the sweetest grow,
And the softest breezes blow,
By the waters let us go,
At Winona.

O there's work for all to do
In the church we love so dear,
Work that calleth me and you
At Winona;
There are plans to make or mend,
There are causes to defend,
There are blessings without end,
At Winona.